

AN  
EPISTLE  
TO  
FRIENDS,

Shewing, The Great Difference between a  
Convinced Estate and a Converted Estate ;

And between the Profession of the Truth, and the  
Possession thereof ;

With the Comfort and Sweetness to the Soul it  
Affordeth.

With a Few Words of Good Counsel and Wholesome Ad-  
vice both to Parents and their Children.

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By One, that Travels for Sion's Prosperity, known by  
the Name of

John Banks.

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An Epistle to Friends, shewing the great Difference between a *Convinced Estate*, and a *Converted Estate*; And between the *Profession* of the Truth, and the *Possession* thereof, with the Comfort and sweetness to the Soul it Affordeth, &c.

**S**ince the Dawning of the Heavenly Day and living Appearance of the pure God, and Rising of his Glorious Son by his Light, Grace and *Holy Spirit*, many have been called and *Convinced* of the Truth and way of God, what it is, and how they might walk therein: This Knowledge hath been given to many, of God in and through *Jesus, Christ*, his Son, by his Light, Grace and *Holy Spirit* put and placed in the Hearts and Consciences of the Sons and Daughters of Men.

Now that which the Lord requires thereby, is *Obedience* and *Faithfulness* thereunto, according to the Knowledge so given, which is to *deny Self*, and take up and willingly bear the *Cross* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, which Crucifies to the World, and the World to them with all its vile Affections and Lust; these come to know not only a *Convinced Estate*, but a *Conversion* in their Hearts and Souls.

Now the *Counsel* of God, that in my Heart and Soul remains, in Bowels of true Love, Tenderness and Compassion, and as a *Faithful Warning* also unto all such, who have remained (whether many Years, or few) under a *Convincement*, or in a *Convinced Estate*, is, That you carefully and in true fear yield pure *Obedience* unto God, according to the Knowledge he hath given you by his pure *Light, Grace* and *Holy Spirit*; being no Sacrifice short of this, doth find Acceptance with him: who by the same lets you see, and accordingly teaches you what you shall *deny your selves in*: What you must part with

and forsake ? What you should do, and what you should not in order to your *Conversion* : and *Sanctification*.

I say, as having a Stress upon my Spirit, in the Love of God unto all you, as before ; *Tie'd Obedience unto God according to the Knowledge you have received from him*, and do no longer satisfie your selves, nor speak Peace to your selves, because you are *Convinced* of the *Truth*, and because you know the *Truth* and *Way* of *God*, what it is, and so make a *Profession* thereof ; think not that this *Knowledge* will serve your turn to justifie you in the sight of God, *Heb. 5. 8.* short of *Obedience*. For Christ himself, though he was the Son of God, he learned *Obedience* ; and how much more ought the Sons and Daughters of Men learn *Obedience*, though never so Rich, Wise, Great and Potent in the World, or never so much Accounted of among the Sons and Daughters of Men : That so through *Obedience* to the known Will and requirings of God, you may come to feel and be sensible of the work of his Power and Holy Spirit in your Hearts, there to Change you, to work, and *Convert* you into the nature of Truth, to the bearing of the Heavenly Image thereof : The working of which, as it's truly waited for and kept to ( viz. ) the Power, begets fear towards God, lest such should disobey him, or grieve his good Spirit ; and so effects Brokenness and Tenderness of Heart and Spirit before the Lord, and works into lowliness of mind in carriage and Behaviour before all people ; softens the hard Heart, brings down the high mind, and proud and lofty Spirit, and subjects the stiff and unruly will and Nature. And they who come to know this Work wrought in them, in order to their *Conversion*, come to know it in and under, and after their being so *Convinced*, they must and do come to know it through *Judgement*, which they must love, and patiently dwell in, if ever they come to know a *Converted Estate*. Through the same ( to wit *Judgement* ) be set up and kindled in their hearts as a Fire, and know the Word of God as a Sword and Hammer, yet notwithstanding it must be loved : For so said the Prophet ; *How do I love thy Judgement* : And Christ said, *I will not break*

*the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax, untill Judgement be brought forth unto Victory.*

So have a Care ( all, who are *Convinced*, and do make a *Confession* to, and *Profession* of the Truth ) of presuming upon the Mercies of the Lord in your *Disobedience*, and flying *Judgement*, or that which *Judgeth* you because of your *Disobedience*, and flying the Cross.

For *Judgement*, you must either know and love, and patiently dwell in and keep to, or else your hard Hearts you can never know *Converted* and Changed ; and the Word of God as a *sharp two edged sword*, that will cause pain in your Bowels, and beget Godly sorrow in you to bring you to true *Repentance*, by weeping and mourning for your *Disobedience*, you must either know and love, or else the *First-Born* in you can never come to be *slain*, which is that Life in that Nature, that you have lived after the Flesh in doing and having your own Wills, in fulfilling your own Hearts Lusts ; and the Word of God as a *Fire*, you must either know and love, and patiently dwell in, and Judgement to be set up and executed in your Hearts, or else you can never know the *Combustible matter* there *Consumed*; the *Bryars* and the *Thorns*, the *Love of the World*, the *Lust of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eye*, the *Pride of Life*, the *Cares of the World* which is said to *choak* the good Seed, as to the coming of it up in its Growth, in the Hearts of People. I thus set forth unto you that the way of your Redemption out of Captivity and Spiritual Bondage, and to come to a *Converted Estate* must be in and through *Judgement*, and that as by a *Fire* and *Hammer*, or *Sword*, think it not hard ; for it's the right Doctr. to come in by to receive *Mercy* from the Lord's Hand ; of whom it's said, *He mixes mercy with judgement*, ( but then the *Judgement* must be owned. ) And though many are they in number, that are living Witnessess, this has been the Way of the dealings of God with their Souls ; and it was to them, and to you in the Offers of it, *Gods free Love*, in and through Jesus Christ his Son, who said : *For Judgement I am come into the World ; and all judgement is* *John 5. 22.* committed unto him,

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So now all ye, who remain in a *Convinced Estate*, and live and act contrary to that which Convinceth you, ye should not there remain in Disobedience: for ye may see (if ye will but turn to your minds in fear towards God) the great Difference between a *Convinced Estate*, and a *Converted Estate*. For the Hearts, Souls and Spirits of those that are turn'd to God in Righteousness, and so truly *Converted* and changed, and have known a Passing from Death unto Life the way I have shewed you, they are *Broken-hearted*, *Lowly-minded*, and in their Souls and Spirits there remains a true Tenderneſs; and ſuch are concerned to ſet a watch before their Lips daily, that they may not offend with their Tongues! and not only in *Words* but in *Actions*; and that they may live the life of Truth they make profeſſion of. And it's ſuch that grows in Grace and Saving knowledge, and that proſper in their *Gifts* given unto them of the *Free-giver* (who fear him always) and that to his Praise and Glory, and their remaining Comfort and Souls ſweet Satisfaction.

And therefore is it, that the Hearts of the *truly Converted* are fitted and prepared by the power of God to *offer Offerings* and *Sacrifices* unto him, that find Acceptance with him.

But the Hearts of the *Convinced*, that live in Diſobedience, and are not willing to bear the daily Croſs, nor come under Judgement, are not ſo, but are hard; and their minds high, not Subject to the Yoke of Chriſt, nor willing to bear his burthen; and yet can ſatiſſie your ſelves in *coming as the People come, and ſit as God's people ſit* in their Meetings and Aſſemblies, and *like to hear thy Words* (as the Lord ſaid by the Prophet) *but will not do them*; and *thou art unto them*, ſaith the Lord, *as a lovely Song, as one that hath a pleaſant Voice, and can play well upon an Inſtrument*; and they ſhew forth much love with their Mouths; but their hearts go after their *Covetouſneſs*. Therefore let theſe things be as Warnings unto you, all that only remain in a *Convinced Estate*, and bear Profeſſion of the Truth, ſhort of the Poſſeſſion thereof: and take warning be-  
*Prov. 6. 23.* times, receive Counſel and give ear to inſtruction,  
*cap. 15. 10.* and own reproof, for it is the Way of Life, before Death ſeize upon you, that will ſtay

stay no Man or womans time nor leifure to Repent, and Amend their wayes and doings; least that day and Hour come upon you, as a *Thief in the night*, that you, like the foolish Virgins, are not aware of. And then you finding your selves not fitted and prepared to go hence, be made to cry upon your *Death-Beds*, when *time* that you had, is spent (in forgetfulness of God, and the many warnings you have had) *Lord, open to us!* But if you put off the day and time of the amendment of your ways and doings untill then, you know aforehand, what will be the Answer you must have given you: First *The Door of Mercy will be shut* against you, that have not loved *Judgements* in your Life-time; and the Answer will be, *Depart from me I know you not.* *Matth. 25. 10, 11, 12.*

*I Called and Cried, but ye would not hear; and therefore you shall call and cry, but I will not Answer.* Oh! how long has the Lord Called and Cried, and Knockt at the Door of your Hearts, and striven with you by his good Spirit, as by an Immediate Hand, who would often thereby have retained you from your backslidings and unfaithfulness, and Disobedience; who hath not been severe in marking what you have done amiss, and therefore you have presumed upon his patience and long-suffering (*Do so no more*, that's Christs Lesson) And sometimes when, because of the Long-suffering of God to you ward, it hath entred your Hearts to consider, how just it might have been with him, to have *Cut you off* long ere now in his wrath for your *Disobedience!* No doubt, but sometimes you have made *Vows* and *Promises* in Your selves, You would do so no more, as heretofore you had done: And after all this for want of watchfulness over the outgoings of your minds, and for want of taking true heed unto the shinings of the pure *Light of Jesus Christ* that discovered your State and Condition to you, as it was, and for want of keeping the fear of the Lord before your Eyes, the Enemies of your Souls with his old Baits in the fair proffers of them you have again Entred his Temptation, and so have sinned and rebelled against, and contrary to the striving of his good Spirit, the Spirit of *Truth*, and Contrary to his pure Counsel, the Light, wherein the true power is received to resist the wicked one in all his Devices,



John 3. 19. Devices, who believe therein, and keep thereto! which pure Light will for ever be the *Condemnation* of those that do not love it, and that are not willing to bring their deeds to it, that they may be manifest whether they are wrought in God or no; for all the Children of the *Light* and of the *Day* bring their *Deeds* to it.

And besides the many *Visitations* of *Gods Love* to you by an immediate Hand, by the strivings of his good Spirit in your Hearts; or at the Door of your Hearts; O the *Labour, Travel and Exercise* of *God's Servants, Ministers, and Messengers*, with which they have been attended, and weightily concerned, many times both in *Body* and *Spirit* in their Testimonies, in Love, good will and true *Tenderness* for the good of your immortal Souls. And yet notwithstanding the *Lords* great

and large Love to you, *First* in calling you by his Grace out of the World, and the ways and dead *Worships* and *Forms* of it, and in it, and his giving you a knowledge of his Will and Mind thereby, that you might learn *Obedience* accordingly; and notwithstanding the striving of his Holy Spirit in order to bring you thereunto; together with the great *Labour, Travel and Pains*, that the *Servants of Christ* have been willing to take, and Travel many *Hundreds of Miles* over *Sea* and *Land*, through *Difficulties* and various *Exercises*, willingly leaving behind them whatsoever is near and dear unto them, or never so good and lawful in it self, for the good of your Souls, with the rest of *God's People*, yea, in love to all *People*; in and through all which the *Love of God* has been and is largely held forth unto you. And yet notwithstanding all this, and much more that might be mentioned, hath it not proved the unhappiness of too many of you *Professing* the *Truth*, that are not come to *possess* the same, because of your unfaithfulness, that you have requested both the Lord and his *Servants Evil for Good*, and have chosen your own way, and followed the Counsel of your own Hearts Lusts, being *unconverted*, and spoken Peace to your selves in a polluted rest? And are not some of you too much like those the Lord speaks of by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, when he said, *Son of Man, the Children*



*Children of thy People are still talking against thee by the Walls and in the Doors, saying one to another, and every man to his Brother, I pray you, let us hear the Word that cometh forth from the mouth of the Lord : Which although, as I have hinted, they confessed unto, and seemingly liked to hear, yet they were not willing to do accordingly. And when this cometh to pass ( and it will, saith the Lord ) they shall know there hath been a Prophet among them.*

Methinks it sounde in my Ears as though they spake mockingly or in derision, Scorn or dislike against the Prophet; and it were well if this proved not the Estate and Condition of too many *Professing Truth* in our day ! But I fear and have a Godly Jealousie, and have seen and felt to much of it, in my Travels and various Exercises, that there are too many that undervalue and dis-esteem the *Labour and Travail of Gods Servants, Ministers and Messengers*, yea, the very Ancient and Elder Brethren, as well as the Younger, except they appear as these that are very Wise and Eloquent (though in the Life and Power ) and by a proud, disdainfull Lordly Spirit, that is of an Earthly Savour, are often busying themselves, and *Whispering, and tattling and talking against Faithful Brethren*, that have born the burthen in the Heat of the Day. And if you can but espy any Failure or Weakness (as you think) in or by any of them, though but one of a Thousand, as to what you will take Liberties to your selves to do, and yet Justifie your selves therein, though readily Judge and Condemn them, Do not you thinke thereby to Cover your Iniquity and Disobedience : For I must tell you in Love and true Tenderneſs, you will find your selves greatly mistaken & deceived by the *Enemy of your Souls* ; who through his Subtily perswades you to believe his *Lyes*, and that in the day and time of your Account : For according to the Deeds done in your own Bodys, or by your selves, so must your reward be, whether ~~they~~ be good or evil.

Why talked the People that far as Gods People did, against the Prophet in his Time ? Was it for any other thing than *speaking the Words of the Lord* ? What do some in our day speak and talk one to another against the Servants of Christ for, as though ( in their account ) if every one appears not in  
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their Testimony as an Eye or a Hand, they must have no place in the Work of God ; but are cut off and thrown away, in their Judgement ? Is it now any more than in the Prophets time ? Is it for any thing else, but because those that have the *Word* now, must speak it in Faithfulness unto all that such

is spoken against ? And are they counted Enemies therefore by some ? As *Paul* said, that blessed Apostle in his time. Oh ! when will your minds Change ! when will your Hearts be rent and tender'd to the humbling of you under the Consideration of those thing ! And not so to abide your own Mercies, or the Mercies and large loving kindnesses of the Lord thus held forth and continued unto you ! why is *Wit*, why is *Wisdom* in the Man's part, *Wealth* and the *Strength* of mans *Reason* so much accounted of, and such so Esteemed, and others more simple under valued ? And why is the *Simplicity* of the *Gospel* so trodden down and run over by too many in the overlines ? Do not you see, and will you not Consider, how the Lord has and will confound the wisdom of the Wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the Prudent ones, who exalt themselves thereby ? For he giveth more grace to the humble, and will exalt the Man of low Degree ; and such shall be Abased.

The blessed Apostle came not with enticing Words of Mens wisdom, neither the words that *Mens Wisdom* teacheth ; but in the Demonstration of the Power and Spirit of God : So they that exalt themselves, though never so high in words, excellent speeches, and Scholastick Terms, and though they be never so much cried up, the Lord will, as he has done, Cast down such ; as by woful Experience too much it is to be seen by those that by a light airy spirit, notwithstanding their words have floated above the pure simplicity of the Gospel. So all keep low, and there is safety.

What do some under a Profession of the Truth, though out of the Possession thereof, and Life and Practice of the same, think themselves so secure, that because of Ease, Peace and Liberty (though but outward) have and do so continue, there is no such need of Diligence and Faithfulness towards God ; and as though it were afforded that they might seek themselves

selves, and serve themselves. and make use of their time to grow *Rich* and *Great* in the World, and as though this *Day* would still last to such unfaithful ones: Oh, I tell you *Nay*, you deceive your selves therein: For God hath determined to Visit this Nation, and the People thereof as by a *Rod* and a *Scourge*, because of the sins and Abominations thereof: For his Soul is vexed, and his Holy Spirit is grieved even into Wrath, and sore Displeasure. And you that

*Rom. 1. 18.* make a *Profession* of his Name, and not in Truth and Righteousness, who sow to the Flesh and not unto the Spirit, do not think to escape the *Judgement* without a timely Repentance: for you are neither one with that of God in your selves, nor in Unity with his People; and in the Execution of his Righteous Judgement upon this Nation you will be found in the *Outer Court*, to be troden under the foot of the *Gentiles*. And yet notwithstanding,

*Revel. 11. 2.* whatsoever the Lord sees good to bring to pass in the Earth, as he always had, he hath still a way and place to preserve his faithful Ones, as in a City within the Gate. within the Door, whose Walls is Salvation, or as those that know *Salvation for Walls and Bulworks*. So stay not behind in *carelessness*, neither abide any longer in the *outer Court*, though seemingly you may enjoy *Ease, peace and fulness* for a time, *Trouble* and *Perplexity* will overtake all such. So make good use of the time, the Lord in love and mercy may yet afford you, and strive with diligence and fear to get within the *Wall* into the *Inner Court*, that is, into the Life, into the Power, into the Possession of the Truth, you make *Profession* of, or else you will be left behind, liable to be destroyed by the *Destroyer*, and devoured by the *Devourer*. Then you shall remember, that I with many of God's faithful Servants, have given you a Faithful Friendly Warning.

Now through all these things you may see, that are serious and Considerate, the great and vast Difference between a *Convinced Estate*, and a *Converted Estate*, and between the *Profession* of the Truth barely, and the *Possessor* thereof. For the *Professor* of the Truth in words, out of the Life and Practice, is dry, barren and empty, and unsensible of Life in their Souls, out of the Faith that gives *Victory*; Wells with-

*out Water, Clouds without Rain*, minding Earthly things more then heavenly ; *Reprobate Silver* shall men call them, who because of their Extraordinary love to, and gaping after the World in too much love thereunto, more than to God, his Truth and People, or for the good of their own Souls. For if some that profess the Truth, were but as much concerned in faithfulness to God, and for the good of their own Souls, in order to win Heaven and the Salvation thereof, as they are concerned for the Earth, and to heap up Riches they know not for whom, well might it be with many as to their Eternal Happiness.

But being that such are many times, more concerned for the Assurance of the *Terrestrial*, than the *Celestial* ( viz. ) more for the *Earthly* than the *Heavenly*, hence it is, that although such profess the Truth and the worship of God amongst his People, they grow very indifferent about the performance of it : For they can scarce find any time to come to *Meetings*, but on the *First Day*. What differ these from the *Professor* and *Prophane* in the World ? Let such say so to themselves, and amend their ways and doings. And when such do come to *Meetings*, its too apparent where their *Treasure* is, and their *Hearts* are with it, to wit, in the *Earth* : And so their minds and heads are pull'd down-ward, by reason of the weight of it upon them. And hence it is, that such are *Dead, Dry, Sottish, Careless* and *Sleepy* in *Meetings*, which sheweth forth the coldness of their love to Godward, his Truth and People, and worthy Name of the Lord; and how unconcerned they are for the Management of the Affairs and concerns of Truth in *Men and Womens Meetings*, and neglect *Week-day-Meetings*. And yet none readier than such to Judge and Censure those that are faithful, diligent and laborious, and wholly devoted, what in them lies, to serve the Lord, his Truth and People, both in managing and maintaining the Affairs and Concerns of Truth. This is the Trick of all *Idlers*, that would *Eat*, but will not *Work* themselves, to judge and find many *Faults* with them that are diligent in their Labour and Concern ; which maketh the Labour and Travel of God's faithful Servants, that have his Work to do, and his Word to speak, sometimes hard and uneasy, because

because often the Work is great, and the Labourers but few: So it must needs lie heavy upon some, though censoriously judged for their Pains. Howbeit, notwithstanding some in our day, as the Prophet in his time, *Labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought*, as to effect good to the unconcerned; yet their Peace is with the Lord, and their reward cometh from him; Praises, pure Honour and Glory be given to his Holy Name and great Power for evermore, saith my Soul, who will not have any to shut a Door in his House for nought.

*Go to the Ant, thou Sluggard, Consider her ways, and be wise, thou Sleepy Lazy one:* For though she hath no Guides, Overseer nor Ruler, that thou Professest to have, that professest the Truth, and yet out of the Possession; yet she, the poor Ant, provideth her Meat in the Summer, and gathereth her food in the Harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard! When wilt thou rise from thy Sleep! thinkest thou? What, yet more sleep, and yet more slumber? and yet more folding of thy hands together? So shall thy Poverty come upon thee, as one that Travelleth, and thy Want as an armed Man. Prov. 6. v. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Wherefore there is a Cry in the secret of my Soul unto all you Professors of Truth, that are not yet come into the Possession thereof, to come away: arise, and stand up upon your Feet, both Man and Woman, and shake your selves from the Dust of the Earth: For Dust is a stifling and choaking thing; why are you so willing to Travel with such a burthen upon your heart and mind, as the Earth is? by reason of which the just Pure Seed of God is oppressed in you, which causeth you to Groan in your Travel: wherefore the time of Meeting, and when you should wait upon Worship, and serve God, it's wearisom and tedious unto you. Oh! Come away, come away all you that make Profession of the Truth, and yet feel not of the sweetness and Comfort that it affords to the Souls of those that are in the Possession, and live the Life thereof: Come away, escape for your lives to Zoar, the City of safety, and look not back into Sodom again: Remember Lot's Wife: And once at last, quit your selves like Men and Women for God, and not only like,

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but really so: And freely and willingly part with, forsake and cast off all those many things that have been so glued to your minds, or your minds to them; that have been as so many *Lovers* hugged in your Bosoms, all which is but as an *Harlot* you are joyned unto: So your serving and *Profession* has been and is in the *Flesh*, where you cannot please God. Cast off all these *letting*, *cumbring things*, that you have too long so much loved, by which the enemy of your Souls hath lulled you asleep, that have hindred you from embracing of the Love of God in your Hearts, in and through Jesus Christ his Son; that room there, and openness there (instead of straitness and closeness) may be—For the Appearance of God's Son in his Glorious Rising and living Appearance, by his pure *Light*, teaching *Grace* and *Holy Spirit*; that will not only shine to let you see, but Teach you what you shall deny your selves in and of, but what manner of Lives you must live: And not only so, but as you believe and wait upon God, therein Power you shall receive, whereby you may be enabled to answer and perform the same; that instead of a bare *Profession*, you may come to know the *Possession* of Life and Power, true Peace, Sweetness and comfort in your Hearts and Souls, and instead of wearisomness and irksomness in the time of Meeting among Gods people, you may come to have a true Delight in the Joy of God's Salvation, in waiting upon (though in Silence) and worshipping and serving of God in Spirit and Truth, as all the Faithful have, that are in the *Possession* of that they make *Profession* of; and that instead of Deadness, Dulness, Sleepiness and Unconcernedness in *Meetings*, and Conversation too, you may come through Faithfulness and true Obedience, in a self-denial and bearing the daily Cross to feel a change wrought in your hearts through the power that is of God, in and through the execution of the righteous Judgement, and so come to be quickened and enlivened by the quickening Spirit of the *second Adam*, the Lord from *Heaven*; and so come to have a living concern to attend your Hearts and Minds both in *Meeting* and *Conversation*; as all that live the life of Truth they make *Profession* of, are attended with; which makes them to say, because of the Sweetness and comfort their Souls are in a *Possession* of, that is as a  
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Stream from a Fountain, or a living Spring from a Well: even the Fountain and Well of Life; Oh, Truth is precious unto me! I would sell or part with any thing that I have, that is to be parted with, that I might purchase more of the fulness of it: But I would not sell it for all the World, nor no Enjoyment that is in it, neither a *Wife* nor an *Husband*, nor any *Possession* or Enjoyment here below, though never so great, fair or promising. For such say in their Hearts, that commands them to God, *My beloved* (to wit, the *Truth*) *is mine: and I am his*, the fairest and chiefest unto me of *Ten thousand*; And such it is in their heavenly and Spiritual Exercise, that sit where the *Sponse* of old did, which is under his Shadow, and that with great delight; and his Fruit is sweet unto their Taste.

And these are they, that above all things *Truth* is precious unto, that feel, partake, possess and enjoy of the sweetness and preciousness thereof in their Hearts and Souls, as I even at this moment of time, with all the truly faithful and Obedient do; to the Praise and glory of the most high God be it spoken. Wherefore my Heart and Soul is broken and melted into true Tenderness before him, which makes me to say again in answer to that weighty concern, that seized upon my Spirit as I was waiting upon the Lord in my own dwelling House (when such weakness of Body attended me, that I was not able to go to a Meeting) to write on this wise, for the good of all I am thus concerned for, in this my Epistle; Oh, the great Difference between a *Convinced Estate*, and a *Converted Estate*! between the *Profession* of the Truth, and the *Possession* thereof; and that chiefly, because of the sweetness and comfort it affordeth unto the Souls of the Faithful. \*So that I was truly willing, in Obedience to the blessed requirements of the Lord my God, on this wise to discharge my conscience, and ease my Spirit in answer unto the movings and motion of his pure, Holy, Living Spirit, that (blessed be his Holy Name for evermore) he hath made me, with a large Remnant, livingly sensible of, desiring and heartily wishing, that my endeavours hereby may be truly Effectual for the good of all that may be concerned in this my Testimony.



And now *Friends*, unto you that are *Parents*, and that have *Children*, I have something to say both to *you*, and your *Children*.

And in the first place, the concern that is upon my mind, and hath often and long remained, Is to give you to understand a little of my own Experience. and concern in *Ordering* and *Training* up of my own *Children*, that if happily it may tend to stir up those, or such as may be short in their *Duty* towards their *Children*.

When it pleased the Lord to give me *Children*, as Mercies from his hand (amongst many more I have received from him) as my *Children* grew up, a concern many times, very weighty, (the Lords knows) seized upon my mind, both upon my Bed, and many other times, what way I might betake my self to Train up my *Children*, as did become the Truth, and that might become a Blessing to them, and a Comfort to us their *Parents*. And accordingly I saw it my way, as much as in me lay, that as they grew up in years, to mind and take diligent notice of their *Natural Inclination*, or what it was they most *naturally Inclined* unto: and when I saw any one of them to *Incline* to any thing in *Word* or *Action*, that under a serious Consideration was not like to prove, if it was suffered to grow or increase, either to be good for their *Soul* or *Body* (for that which is not good for the *Soul*, it cannot be good for the *Body*) it greatly became my concern to restrain them from that when it was but little and small, and when they were *young*; so that it was both easie for me to do, and them to get over. And when I found any thing of *stubbornness* get up in them, contrary to the Counsel and Advice I had given them, I did not let *foolish pity* prevent due *Admonition* and *Correction*, though I dearly and tenderly did and do love them all.

But some spoil their *Children*, in letting them have their *wills* so much, that they become disobedient and rebellious, and so give away their Power so much to the *Will* of the *Child*, and lessen their Authority: That as sometimes I have heard to the grief of my Soul, *Parents* say to their *Children*, Do such a thing; they have replied, (*I will not*) and whether ought the *Child*, that doth not yet understand what's good either for  
its

its *Soul* or *Body*, to have its *Will*? Or ought not the *Parents* rather to *Constrain* them to do what they know is good for them, though they be *stiff* and *stubborn*? That so, what way or course in after-time their *Children* may take when they are from under their power, the *Parents* may be clear of their *Children* in the day of their Account.

I say, my great concern was many times, how I might *Train* up my *Children*, as did become the *Truth*, chiefly in what might be good for their *Souls*; relying upon Gods Providence for other things, as he did see good. And as they came up in their tender Years one after another, in the Fear of God, I laboured what in me lay, not only by *Advice* and *Counsel* and timely *Endeavours*, to restrain the *wild* and *stubborn* nature, and keep them out of and from every thing, that had an evil tendency in it; but also what in me lay, to beget *Love* in them to *Truth* and *Friends*, and one to another.

And so, as they grew up in years, did encourage them to go to *Meetings*: And I hope I may say without offence, my *Endeavours* (with the Blessing of God) hath wrought a good *Effect* in my *Children* to this day, I bless the Lord for it; and I never durst put them forward to *Play*, as some do; and when they had a Capacity, Educated them in reading the Holy Scriptures and Friends Books: And always had and have a care to keep them out of the vain Fashions of the World; neither could I ever suffer them to go to see or behold any *Sport*, *Game*, or *Pastime*, or *Play*, that tends to nothing but stirring up of the vain, light mind, and letting loose the *wild Nature*, and corrupting of Youth. And it was my great Care and concern, to be a good *Example*, before them and unto them, according to the Counsel I had often given them. And hence it is, where this Care in Carriage and Behaviour in Parents before their Children is a wanting, though such *Parents* may profess the *Truth*, it tends to drive their *Children* farther from it, and hardens their Hearts, and so they grow *wild* and *wanton*, *proud* and *high minded*; and as they get up, run to *Sports* (and *Plays*, and to *Drinking* and *Tippling*) amongst the wild Rabble, as I have seen, to the grief of my Soul, in Towns and other places; and going to *Cock fights* and *Bull-baitings*, and to stand amongst wild rude People, spying a *Foot*  
and

and *Mountebank*; acting Folly and Madness upon a Stage or Rope; against which God's Anger at sometimes by eminent Judgements hath been manifested.

As for Example and Proof : at a certain time, *Example.* when a Person had acted his *Folly* upon a *Rope*; *a Wall suddenly fell upon many people some struck Dead and spoke no more, others their Backs and Legs broken, and others sorely hurt and Maimed, and Bruised, that their blood came out at their mouths.* Therefore let the remembrance of this dread all people, so as not to love or delight to behold Vanity, or such like folly and Madness.

The Godly care of *Parents* in time, to train up their *Children* in the fear of the Lord, and as becomes the Truth, ought to be diligently exercised; for where that's wanting, these disorders too often appear in their Children, that they grow up in *wildness* and *wantonness*, and in their behaviour and *Apparel* to follow the bad ways, courses and Antick *Fashions* of the World. But who durst do such things in the beginning? and Truth is the same; though too many give to their Children, and take to themselves that Liberty that they durst not, nor would truth ever allow of; though I know many neither can, nor do allow, nor give such Liberty, neither to themselves, nor their Children; And blessed and happy are they that so discharge their Duty for that end, they may be clear in the discharge thereof, in the day and time of their Account, which they cannot be, that do to the contrary.

Therefore *Parents* and *Guardians* of Children, discharge your selves in your Duty to your Children, or those with whom you are concerned; and do not think to excuse yourselves with saying, *There is great difference of Children's Nature*: It's true there is; but your indulging of them, and Winking and Conniving at their running out into Vanity and Wildness, makes their Natures worse, and your Children more untruth-like; and you are greatly in the blame.

How comes it to pass that so many Children of those that profess the Truth, are scarce come so far as to use the plain Language? What think you, that if you be Rich, and have great Portions for them, will this make them blessed and happy

happy? And must they not therefore have their wills crost? Consider, that they are Rich that God owns and loves, and poor and miserable that he rejects; and they are Rich that are Rich in Faith and good Works towards him, notwithstanding poor in this world. And the Prophet said, *If riches increase, set not thy Heart upon them; for they will make themselves Wings and fly away.* *Psalms. 62. 10. Prov. 13.*

So *Friends*, take Counsel and be Advised in Bowels of true Love by your *Friend*, that wisheth both you and your *Children* Happiness both here and hereafter. And Train up your *Children* in the Fear of the Lord in all things, as becomes the *Truth* you make *Profession* of: and withal, be sure you be a good *Example* before them, and unto them.

And now *Children* be subject unto your *Parents* in that which is good, and none be Stubborn *Eph. 6. 1,* and Rebellious: for in the end, if you do, it will *2, 3.* prove your own hurt and loss. And if any of *Col. 3. 20.* your *Parents* shew forth any evil example before you, take not Liberty thereby to do any thing that is evil or to speak evil of Truth, nor to neglect Meetings; nor none to satisfy your selves with going to Meetings barely, because your *Parents* go, if you can but have Liberty to your Wills, and do and have what pleaseth you: This is not good for your Souls Health, though you want nothing for your Bodies neither will it make for your Peace with the Lord, when you must be separated from all Worldly enjoyment.

So *Dear Children*, take my Counsel and give ear to my Friendly and tender advice in true love unto you: let it be the concern of your minds chiefly in going to Meetings, with diligence to wait in the fear of the Lord, to feel the Work of his Power in your Hearts to change your Nature, and subject your Wills to do the will of God, to the weaning of your minds from delighting in *Sport* or *Pleasure*, or any *Game* or *Pastime*, or fine *Apparel*, or in earthly *Substance*; that so thereby, to wit, by the work of the Heavenly Power of God your Hearts may be wrought into true tenderness and brokenness, and Minds and Spirits into Lowliness and Humility before him; So will you feel *Love* to increase and abound in your  
Hearts

Hearts towards God, his Truth and Praises; and so will you  
 come, as you carefully mind the Shining of the pure Lights  
 of Jesus Christ, and Teachings of his Gracious Spirit, which  
 will manifest all that which is evil in every Appearance of it  
 unto you, and teach you to do that which is good in Word and  
 Action. I say, this is the way for you to come out of Childish-  
 ness and Childish things, and all manner of Disobedience both  
 towards God and your Parents, and to be weaned from all the  
 Vanities and Pleasures, Customs, and Fashions of the World; so  
 that you will have no delight in keeping Company with any  
 but such as fear the Lord; which will greatly tend to your  
 Happiness and Prosperity both in this Life and that which is  
 to come, as that which teacheth you his Fear, is by you kept  
 in, That so God alone may be Honoured and glorified by you,  
 and you may be a comfort to your Parents; and the greatest  
 of all in the end will be your own. Unto which the Lord  
 preserve and keep you in his fear in all faithfulness, accord-  
 ing to that knowledge, more or less, that you have received  
 from him, out of the Evil that is in the World, is the hear-  
 ty Prayer, and Souls well-wishing of your Friends; both for  
 You, and your Parents, as for my self and my own Children, in  
 discharge of my Duty in the Love of God. The Lord bring  
 it home to your Understandings; Amen.

Given forth in my own  
 Dwelling-House in Cum-  
 berland, the 20th day of  
 the 1<sup>st</sup> Month, 1692

J. B.

Let this be Read in the fear of the Lord, and with Understanding,  
 in the Meetings and Families of Friends, where soever a service  
 may be seen for it.

THE END.